

As Coauthor of Original Legislation, Slaughter Says "Shameful doesn't even begin to describe it."

Rochester, NY – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), an original co-author of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), today called on her colleagues to immediately suspend their efforts to play politics with the reauthorization of this life-saving legislation, calling it an affront to one in four women who suffer from domestic violence nationwide.

"Surely, if there's one issue that should have overwhelming support, it would be the need to end domestic violence once and for all in this country and yet, even when there's a bipartisan agreement on the table, some of my colleagues are more interested in playing politics and insist on passing legislation that for the first time rolls back protections for women," said Slaughter. "Shameful doesn't even begin to describe it."

Today the House of Representatives passed a version of VAWA reauthorization that, for the first time, rolls back protections that have been extended to women since the original passage of the bill in 1994. Rather than considering the Senate version, which passed with strong bipartisan support (68-31), the hyper-partisan House bill severely limits protections available to immigrant women, imposes new barriers to implementation within Native American communities and denies protection to victims within the LGBT community.

"Back when we wrote the Violence Against Women Act, there were those who didn't think protections for victims needed to be written into law," said Slaughter. "In 1993, the year before President Clinton signed VAWA into law, a woman was raped every six seconds in the United States and a female was beaten every 15 seconds. During a time when women were still considered secondary to men, my colleagues of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues and I battled to explain the importance of protecting women from the horrors of violence and abuse. Now the Violence Against Women Act has been law for 18 years and because of it, we have 50 active agencies in the Rochester area alone that now work to provide a safe place for victims and services vital to women who have experienced abuse.

"It took years to get to where we are today and yet we are again fighting some of these same battles in the House. After years of progress is it simply unconscionable to me that we would consider rolling back any of the protections we have fought for so hard and for so long."

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) has saved lives and helped millions of victims find safety, security and self-sufficiency. Since VAWA's enactment in 1994, cases of domestic violence have fallen and over one million women have used the justice system to obtain protective orders against their batterers.

Slaughter was an original co-author of the first VAWA in 1994 along with Congresswoman Pat Schroeder from Colorado. Slaughter has been a cosponsor of subsequent VAWA reauthorizations each year.

In the 112th Congress, Slaughter introduced the Violence Against Women Health Initiative Act, which would help health providers prevent and respond to domestic and sexual violence. Health care providers often only address current injuries, without tackling the underlying cause of those injuries. This highlights the need to ensure that health care providers have the necessary training and support in order to assess, refer, and support victims of domestic violence. H.R. 1578 reauthorizes three existing health programs at current funding authorization levels with changes designed to increase evaluation and accountability.

She has also bravely championed legislation speaking out on the often taboo subject of sexual assault in the military.

[For more on Slaughter's long history of standing up for women, click here.](#)

[For more on her history writing the Violence Against Women Act, click here.](#)

PUBLISHED MAY 16, 2012